



STUDENT WORKSHEET

What is the “Fiscal Cliff” and Should We Fear it?

Reading Comprehension:

1. What is the fiscal cliff?
2. When does the fiscal cliff take effect?
3. Which Act did Congress create to tackle the record-high deficit?
4. What is the current federal budget deficit?
5. What was the public debt on President Bush’s last day in office? What is it now?
6. By how much will the “fiscal cliff” reduce the budget deficit?
7. Who coined the term “fiscal cliff”?
8. How many fewer jobs does the Congressional Budget Office project will be created next year if the fiscal cliff takes effect?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. How would you compromise on the fiscal cliff issue? What programs would you insist on keeping, and which would you be willing to compromise on?

2. Do you think Congress will be able to find a solution before the deadline?

3. Do you think the Budget Control Act was a good idea? What were the options?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.